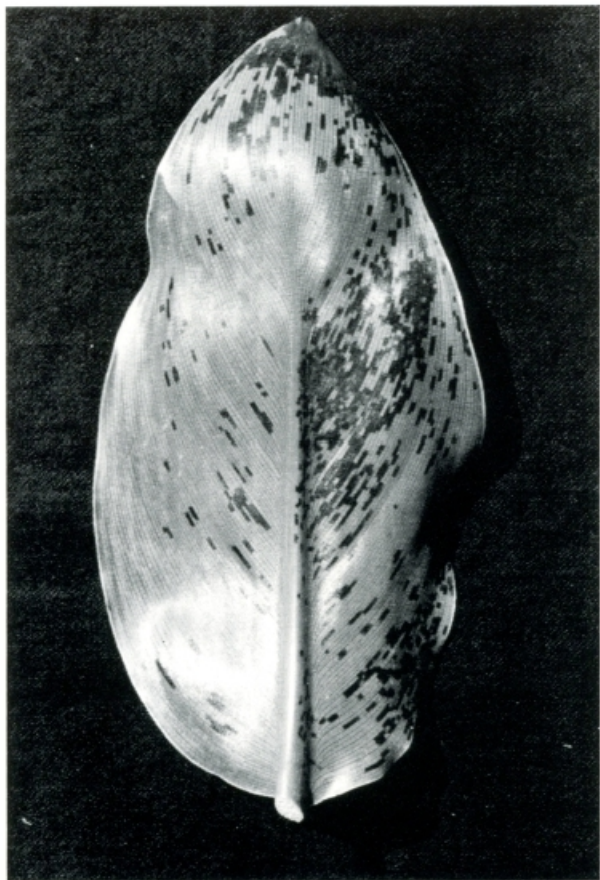


**LEAF SPOT AND BLIGHT OF BIRD-OF-PARADISE
CAUSED BY XANTHOMONAS CAMPESTRIS**

J. W. Miller¹ and A. R. Chase²

Bird-of-paradise, Strelitzia reginae Banks, is a member of the musaceae family and is known for its strikingly beautiful, long-lasting flowers (2). During the past three years a newly described leaf spot disease on this plant has periodically caused economic damage in 90% of the Florida nurseries producing this plant (1).

Symptoms. The disease is caused by an unnamed pathovar of Xanthomonas campestris. Lesions begin as tiny watersoaked interveinal areas on leaves of all ages. The spots turn yellow, then red-brown, and may eventually coalesce to form large areas of necrotic tissue that can encompass entire leaf blades. However, lesions are frequently bordered by leaf veins and remain less than 1 mm in diameter or length (Fig. 1). Petioles are attacked, also. Disease development is favored by temperatures between 21 and 28°C. The pathogen also caused symptoms on S. nicolai (bird-of-paradise tree), but not on Heliconia spp., Musa acuminata (blood banana) or Ravenala madagascariensis (traveler's palm), all members of the musaceae.



This disease closely resembles another bacterial disease on bird-of-paradise described by Wehlburg and caused by a species of Pseudomonas (2). This pathogen infects only the very young leaves, however.

Fig. 1. Xanthomonas campestris on leaf of Strelitzia reginae, showing vein-delimited banding which coalesces to form large, necrotic areas.

¹Plant Pathologist, Bureau of Plant Pathology, P. O. Box 1269, Gainesville, FL 32602.

²Associate Professor of Plant Pathology, Agriculture Research Center, University of Florida, Apopka, Florida 32703

Control. No chemical control is yet available for this disease. It is best to rogue diseased leaves and keep foliage as dry as possible during conditions favorable for disease development. Control strategies must account for the potential of this pathogen to spread to other crops such as Ficus, Pilea, and Pellionia. These plants, as well as bird-of-paradise and bird-of-paradise tree, should be protected if any symptoms of Xanthomonas leaf spot are found on any of these hosts (1).

Survey and Detection. Look for dark stripes between the veins, which resemble foliar nematode damage, and small watersoaked spots that develop into large blotches on leaves of all ages.

Literature Cited

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